Amelie Rives Says Things Many Women Think but Few Admit

Amelie Rives—Princess Troubetzkoy.

Novelist, Who in Private Life Is Princess Troubetzkoy, Puts Much of Her Ideals and Her Philosophy of Life Into New Book--Her Recipe for Marriage

THE first long novel since "The Quick or the Dead" written by Amelie Rives, who is in private life the wife of Prince Pierre Troubetzkoy, the Russian painter and sculptor, is in strong contrast to her seventeen-year-old explosion, in that "World's End" has a happy ending, a mature philosophy and a charming style.

When the 1900 model elevator jolts you into the tiny hall outside the studio of Prince Troubetzkoy, an indiscreet glance down the corridor might disclose him posing his latest model or arranging the fashionable draperies of his last sitter.

With great courtesy I was conducted by the Prince himelf "two steps down and two up" to find the Princess in a flower scented room whose quaint, old fashioned wallpaper caught the shadows from rose-shaded lamps and the flicker of an intimate log fire.

"There should be a play written around this funny studio," said the Princess, rising, laughing, welcoming her visitor with her Southern graciousness and charm and making a wavy blur of black chiffon and fur draperies all in a breath. "Just when one of my husband's most important sitters is posing for her most important portrait the janitor intrepidly appears to go up to the roof through the skylight, or a small boy bursts in to hurl his string of packages and scuttle out."

A description of Phoebe, the heroine of "World's End," immediately suggests the exquisite coloring, the slender lissome grace of Amelie Rives herself. Although so ill from the strain of creating another new novel ("Shadows of Flames") that a trained nurse constantly hovered in the background while an Italian maid stood nervously by the door, ready to be summoned, the sense of her vivid, glowing personality, the superb nervou vitality, so dominated her visitor that it was impossible to talk in the restrained tones adapted to invalids.

"You know I've always had very definite ideas about things, even when a little child," she said. "Once my two old aunts (daughters of the Bishop of Virginia) were staying with my mother, and gave me a little book called 'Line Upon Line'"—here the visitor laughed at the memory of the trilogy, "Precept Upon Precept" and "Here a Little and There a Little." "Said Aunt Sadie upon reading the story of the woman who had thrown her baby into the Ganges as a sacrifice: 'Darling, wouldn't you like to be a missionary?'

"I decided to take the book out under the trees and think it over, with something like this result. 'Aunt Sadie, I simply couldn't. That po' ignorant woman was a heathen and did it to please her God, but I couldn't talk to her about a God who wouldn't forgive His own people that He made himself until He had killed His own son.'

"Aunt, naturally horrified, said, 'What, my dear, you don't believe the Saviour died for man?'

"'Not in the way you believe, because if God is love He just couldn't do that,' and bursting into tears I went out to study the Bible, and finding 'God repented He had made man,' wondered the more.

"I read Shakespeare at 8 and insisted on the unexpurgated edition—not liking asterisks in books or life, and my father allowed me to have it, saying I wouldn't understand it anyhow. I grew up in an atmosphere of love and was allowed to develop naturally, to think and act for myself. One consequence of this was when I wore a short skirt to church I was preached at from the pulpit

"For sixteen years I was ill with appendicitis and when I recovered after an operation that restored me to health, I began work on this book, the only long one I have written since 'The Quick or the Dead' was published. I was 17 when I wrote that one and that was——" she hesitated and laughed. It seemed as if she might have said "ten years ago" without fear of challenge, but she continued:

"'World's End' adventured right much after its birth and these three refusals. Let me show you their letters," she cried enthusiastically, making one swift, darting movement toward a special drawer in her rosewood desk.

"Oh, you would have enjoyed the first one, but I was so provoked that I tore it up. Mr. E. of a famous Philadelphia house wrote that there was material enough for three books, but that it was far too bold and daring for them to publish.

"The second publisher wrote from Boston: 'In accordance with your request we have to-day returned to you the manuscript of your novel "World's End." We recognize very clearly, we think, the imaginative and narrative ability of the book and the energy and elevation of its conception, but, to write you quite frankly, its preoccupations are of a type which, for whatever reasons, we ourselves in a long history of publishing adventures have never been able to publish to advantage.'

"When Mr. Reilly of Reilly & Britton read the book in New York he took the first train to Chicago, meaning to make it the star in their initial performance as publishers of fiction. Mr. Britton, however, declined to accept the book, though he admitted that it was tremendously powerful and one that would have a large sale. In response to Mr. Reilly's note of regret and chagrin I wrote:

"'Never mind; if "Brittons" will be slaves to convention you cannot be, blamed.'"

When the visitor asked for views on the suffrage end of the woman question the Princess smiled again and said:

"I told Mary Johnson I believed in all she did, but I never could join things nor be a propagandist.

"Do you want me to be so banal as to speak of the viewpoint of the average woman of to-day?" she asked, and then without waiting for a reply went on: "I venture to say that the 'average woman' will discover immorality in my frank discussion of motherhood and marriage. Lots of them knit false morality just as they knit neckties, without looking.

"When I was 15 I had a set of rules for marriage and the only one I can remember is: 'Never to allow my husband to ride my hobby, especially on a side saddle.'

"But now I have one recipe for marriage and this is: 'Comradeship mixed with a sense of humor.'"

"Can't we talk about your book?" ventured the visitor softly, and the brilliant smile of the slim Princess enveloped the questioner, and then she began to talk of "World's End," into which she has put much of her ideals and her philosophy of life.

"World's End," the name of the estate and the background for the intense, emotional drama of the novel, is easily recognizable as the home of Amelie Rives's childhood, Castle Hill in Albemarle county, Virginia. The stately old house, with its many Doric columns surrounded by box hedges and grand old trees, orchards, huge paddocks stretching out on all sides and with its own graveyard, forms the setting for this human half tragedy.

The story centres round Phœbe (with her black crow Jimmy Toots), the little cousin more mid-Victorian than modern, full of romance, waiting for her hero to come, living with her old father, who is buried in his books. She has the "hair of destiny," tawny dappled gold, that of Isolde, Guinevere and all the great women lovers of history, with the widow's peak, which spiritualizes her face; a mouth not of the spirit, but triumphantly and radiantly of the flesh, laughter and pleasure loving, curved out at the centre and up at the corners. Her eyes are like pretty nuns in blue habits praying at their windows, while her mouth is like an amoureuse in the street below.

Her nature is to love, to be loved, even to be hurt by what she loved; this she counted living, the rest but shadows.

Owen Randolph, the real man of the book, who is almost too good to be true, is 47 years old, master of World's End, quiet and strong in body, mind and emotion, to whom all women seem like mysterious flowers. He is a product of Harrow and Oxford and has travelled much, has never thought of marrying, and is big and lionlike even to his tawny eyes, with an intuition quick as a woman's. He is not an out and out Socialist, but an asker of questions, seeking to solve the vital problems and the fret of the twentieth century.

Owen's sister, Sally Bryce, and her son Richard live at World's End the greater part of the time, dependent on Owen, Richard being treated and generally considered as his heir. Sally, a once beautiful woman with black resolute eyes, is now all mother, of the tigress type, than which nothing is so ruthless or selfish, for the animal passion of maternity has no sense of humor and therefore no sense of proportion. Richard is fascinating and abnormally clever with a thoroughly distorted viewpoint, a demi-semi-genius who calls himself an ideopraxist.

He is a prince of smatterers with a bisexual brain who would grind anybody's bones to make his cake. He thinks all beauty must have a sinister note to be complete, and says of marriage it is love's bitterest enemy, and holds the Brownings guilty of one of the worst crimes when they took a great passion by the nape and made it respectable.

Mary, with her life of pure self-sacrifice, is a wonderful character sketch, a woman thankful for the precious antidote of humor against pain.

Aunt Charlotte, a bit of ancient history, says of the suffragettes: "I'd rather be a female dog and bay the moon than a modern Virginian woman, a suffragette."

Dr. Patton, who looks like Poe with an illuminating smile, says, "The fear of God is small potatoes with the fear of whiskey"; he also says there would be more angels in houses if people recognized the connection between temper and the arterial system.

Last among the characters in the book may be mentioned the English guest who wanted to know why the whites talked like the blacks instead of vice versa and who asks her hostess of the native okra soup what is this that looks like glue and tastes like heaven?

The philosophy of the book seems summed up in this,—that family life is a dreadfully complex thing and that there is no wickedness, just ignorance—a monstrous tolerance! The ultimate religion is to love what is beautiful and hate what is ugly in life and ourselves and others—and never to judge.

Mistakes in Business

ACCORDING to the philosophic statistician of a large business house down town the proportion of mistakes made every day in the business world of New York averages 25 to every 100 transactions. This does not mean 25 per cent. of serious errors, but that one-quarter of the business transactions of New York show an error large or small in judgment or action.

The statistician declares that the general managers of all large concerns make at least one mistake a day in the conduct of their business affairs. It is true that this one mistake is not so easily detectable as are the mistakes of subordinates. Only the general manager's secretary or confidential stenographer knows about it in most cases. Yet the mistake is made.

What kind of mistake? Well, one kind is where the general manager has been informed by his subordinate that a certain matter must have his yes or no as soon as it can be given. The general manager may be hurrying away for a week end or going out to the golf links on an early train. He will say: "Bring that to my attention on Monday."

On Monday the matter is brought to his attention again, but he is just going to lunch with a visitor. He postpones it again. When he takes it up finally the situation that called for his decision has changed, and no matter which way he decides a certain opportunity has been lost.

Of course the general manager in most cases makes light of the remissness. Before his subordinate he affects to believe that it is just as well that nothing was done because it might have led to unsatisfactory entanglements. The subordinate knows better, but he doesn't presume to say so. In fact he would have advised his superior to have come to a decision while the situation could be saved had he dared. But he knew that such advice would have met with haughty rebuff.

And it may as well be noted that the same sort of remissness on the part of a subordinate would meet with severe reprimand from the general manager. The latter would be likely to tell the subordinate that such conduct was very reprehensible and could not be tolerated. But this is not a recital of the differences between employer and employed.

The mistake statistician figures that 15 per cent. of the daily mistakes in the business world are in computations. Bookkeepers are supposed to be exact, yet not a day passes that some absent minded man at a ledger is not setting down naughts where there should be sixes and fives where there should be eights. He is putting trouble in cold storage through the mistake. It will not be discovered perhaps for months, but when it looms up it will have become a mountain of error.

In the telegraph world hundreds of errors are made in message transmission daily. Most of these errors do not work great harm and can be smoothed out. Some, however, cause all sorts of trouble. The telegraph companies have a rule that in order to insure against mistakes the sender of a message should have it repeated back.

The banks are notably free from mistakes. Errors do creep in, but they must be cleared up immediately. All night sessions of bank clerks in order to ferret out errors is nothing new. Cash divisions of department stores are often confronted with the same necessity.

Mistakes on railroads? Not many of them, but still they do happen. Mistakes in the army and navy routine? Well, one glance at the mass of papers pinned together and covering cases that are going the rounds for investigation would convince you that the percentage of error in both services is appreciable. Each batch of papers reveals very often four or five mistakes, and frequently mistakes creep in connected with the very routine of the transmission of the case for investigation. Many a curt note is appended to the constantly increasing mass of memoranda and references, which says: "This complaint should never have been sent to this department," &c.

The men at the head of big concerns make trivial mistakes of routine every day. In one week, the statistician records, the superintendent of a large factory failed to catch his train twice and also missed three appointments that meant business by from three to ten minutes and lost his temper over the telephone once while talking to an unknown who proved to be a director of the concern that employed him. These were all mistakes. He owned up to them all the following week, in a flush of good feeling that came with a consummation of a very successful deal.

One business man dictated a letter that caused the shipment of twenty gross of an article that was two sizes larger than he needed or could use. He started in to bluster and to charge the mistake to somebody else, but it was pointed out that he had given his stenographer a memorandum in his own handwriting supplementing his letter. Even this verification of the stenographer's correctness did not set him right with himself. He grumbled his disbelief that he could have made such an error, and gave the impressoin that he thought some sort of witchcraft was at work in the office.

Mistakes by the men on top seem the more flagrant because [illegible] many aides to prevent [illegible] times in the bureau [illegible] throne" there is a system [illegible] one man a check on [illegible] would seem a pretty effe[illegible] But the disinclination to [illegible] tion of "the chief" to a [illegible] that may be, after all, [illegible] of the boss, heads off [illegible] ful subordinate from [illegible] to error.

All in all, if the [illegible] rect in his computa[illegible] world is far from the [illegible] bility that many supp[illegible] reached. In the case of [illegible] by the big fellows in [illegible] remember: "To err is [illegible] case of mistakes by the [illegible] business world, likewise [illegible] err is fatal."

The Personality of American Cities

Continued from Fifteenth Page.

one of the smokiest railroad tunnels in existence—and that is saying much.

In winter Denver society has a fixed programme. On Monday night it religiously attends the Broadway Theatre, a playhouse which on at least one night of the week blossoms out as gayly as the Metropolitan Opera House. Denver assumes to prove herself the Paris of America by the gayness of its gowns and its hats and a Denver restaurant on Monday night after the play only seems like a bit of upper Broadway, Manhattan, transplanted. On Tuesday afternoon society attends the vaudeville at the Orpheum and perhaps the Auditorium or one of the lesser theatres that night. By Wednesday evening at the latest the somewhat meagre theatre possibilities of the place are exhausted and one wealthy man from New York who went out there used to go to bed on Wednesday until Monday, when the dramatic programme began anew.

To make a great seaport city out of a high springing ridge of volcanic origin was a truly herculean task, but Seattle sprang to it with all the enthusiasm of her youth. "Regrading" is what she has called it, and because even armies of men with pick and with shovel could not work fast enough for her own satisfaction she borrowed a trick from the old time gold miners and put hosemen at work. Hydraulic science supplanted men and teams and picks and even the big steam shovels. The splashing hose wore down the crests of the great hills until sturdy buildings teetered on their foundations and late moving tenants had to come and go up and down long ladders.

In 1881 President Hayes came to this strange little lumbering town and spoke from the platform of the two storied Occidental Hotel in the centre of the village to its entire population—some 500 persons. The Occidental Hotel was gone within ten years, to be replaced by a hostelry that in 1890 was big and showy for any town, and that in 1912 Seattle regarded almost as a relic of past ages. And stranger still, the hills—the eternal hills, if you please—that looked upon the Occidental Hotel only yesterday have gone. Not that Seattle will not always be a sidehill town, that the cable cars will not continue to climb up Madison street from the waterfront like flies upon a windowglass, but that a tremendous reformation has been wrought with the aid of engineers' skill and the famous "hard money" of the Pacific coast.

For here was a town that decided almost over night to be a seaport of worldwide reputation. She looked at her high hills ruefully. Then she called for the hosemen. The hills were doomed.

The distinctive mannerisms of San Francisco are changing—slowly but very surely indeed. Some of them still remain, however, in greater or less force. At the restaurants, in the shops and in the hotels you receive your change in "hard money"—gold and silver coin. Your real San Franciscan will have nothing else. There is something about the substantial feeling of a coin, something about the tinkling of a handful of it that runs straight to the bottom of his heart. Since the fire—which worked even more fearful havoc with San Francisco comforts than with the physical structure of the city—the use of paper money has increased. But your true Californian will have none of it. When he goes East and they give him paper money he fusses and fumes about it—inwardly at least. He thinks that it may slip out of that pesky inner pocket of vest or coat. He wants gold—a handful of it in his trousers pocket to jingle and to stay put. And as for pennies, you who count yourself of the East will have to come East once again before you pocket such copper trash—they will have none of them upon the West coast. Small change may be anything else, but it is not Western.